HINATA NO OOKAMI

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CHAPTER 3

WE'RE LEAVING
HONJOU INN
IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE LEAV-ING
HIJIKATA-SAN, ARE YOU OKAY?

MY HEAD HURTS I FEEL SICK
I CAN DRINK, ABOUT ONE GO
WELL, YOU DRANK FIVE GO, DIDN'T YOU?
YOU GUYS CAN GO FIRST.
YOU HAVE A HANG-OVER YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE HAD SOMETHING TO DRINK IF YOU CAN'T HOLD YOUR LIQUOR.

(TN: ONE GO IS APPROXIMATELY 0.18 LITRES.)

AND ALL AT ONCE!
NO ONE ELSE WOULD DO THAT
YOU COULD'VE JUST CUT HIM DOWN
'CUT HIM DOWN' SERI-ZAWA YOU MEAN?
I WISH I COULD'VE SEEN THE FACE-OFF BETWEEN THE TWO OF YOU, THOUGH
YOU'RE SAYING SOME DANGER-OUS THINGS, OKITA-KUN.
IF YOU SAY THINGS LIKE THAT, HIJIKATA-SAN'S LIFE MAY BE IN DANGER, YOU KNOW?
I KNOW THAT ALREADY.

.....
HE'S IN CHARGE OF ROOM ASSIGN-MENTS, SO HE WENT AHEAD OF US
WHERE'S KONDOU-SAN?
NO, THIS NEEDS TO BE SET-TLED
WELL, IT DOESN'T MATTER
YOU HAVE A POINT
YOU SURE IT WASN'T "PLEASE TAKE CARE OF ME, TOSHI-SAN"?
HE SAID "TAKE CARE OF TOSHI-SAN."

THERE'S A BIG DIFFERENCE
AH... WHAT WAS YOUR NAME AGAIN?
HIJIKATA...
SORRY FOR YESTERDAY, HIJIKATA-KUN.
WHAT'S WRONG, YOU LOOK COMPLETELY PALE TODAY.
I'VE ALWAYS HAD A PALE COMPLEXION...
I THOUGHT I SHOULD TREAT YOU TO A DRINK AT THE NEXT INN, BUT YOU CAN'T DRINK, CAN YOU?
I'LL GIVE THIS TO YOU INSTEAD.
THRUST

WAHAHA! LET'S MEET AGAIN
DRIED PERSIM-MONS
HE'S MAKING A FOOL OUT OF US...
DRINKING SAKE EARLY IN THE MORNING, EH?
I HEARD WINE IS PROHIBITED DURING THE JOURNEY I WONDER IF THAT'S ALL RIGHT...
...HEH, DRIED PERSIM-MONS IN THIS SEASON?
THEY'RE PRICEY, RIGHT?
I'LL HAVE ONE.
SURE, YOU CAN HAVE THEM ALL.
I HEARD DRIED PERSIMMONS ARE GOOD FOR HANG-OVERS YOU SHOULD EAT ONE
.....

I CAN'T DO THAT.
WHATEVER, JUST GO. YOU TALKING TO ME WITH YOUR SHRILL VOICE JUST MAKES MY HEAD POUND
TCH.
I GUESS I'LL SHARE IT WITH EVERYONE SEE YOU!
WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, TELL THEM TO GO AHEAD. I'LL CATCH UP LATER.

ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE FINE? WE COULD BRING YOU IN OUR PALANQUIN, YOU KNOW.
I'LL BE FINE IN A BIT

OH SERIZAWA FORCED YOU TO DRINK YESTER-DAY...

I'M FINE, REALLY, SO PLEASE GO ON AHEAD
I'M THE COMMANDER, I CAN'T DO THAT
YOU'RE FEELING SICK?
IT MUST BE A HANG-OVER. YOU DID PASS OUT AFTER ALL

AH—IT'S FINE! I CAN WALK BY MYSELF!
TURN
I'LL CALL FOR THE PALANQUIN
NO, I'LL WALK WITH YOU
SASAKI-DONO DO GO AHEAD
THEN WE'LL MATCH OUR PACE TO YOURS
WE SHOULD INTRODUCE OURSELVES.
THIS FEELS AWKWARD FOR SOME REASON

I'VE BEEN ORDERED TO ACT AS A MEDIATOR FOR THE ROUSHI GROUP. MY NAME IS YAMAOKA TETSUTAROU.
AND YOU ARE...?
HIJIKATA TOSHIZOU. I'M FROM SHIEIKAN DOJO, WHICH IS IN EDO.
SHIEI-KAN...
—I HUMBLY BEG YOUR PARDON, BUT DUE TO MY IGNORANCE, I HAVE NOT HEARD OF IT.
IT'S JUST A SMALL DOJO
NO, NO.
—THAT REMINDS ME. YOUR MASTER PROBABLY DOESN'T HAVE TO DO ANY MORE ROOM ALLOCATIONS
HE GOT DEMOTED?
HE'S SUCCEEDING SERIZAWA-SAN AS THE SECTION HEAD OF THE SIXTH SQUAD.

THEY SAID THAT KONDOU-SHI WASN'T SUITED FOR ROOM ALLOCATING
SUCCEEDING SERIZAWA.
...CERTAINLY, KONDOU IS CRUDE AND CLUMSY, SO HE'S NOT SUITED FOR JOBS LIKE ARRANGING LODGING, BUT...
WON'T SERIZAWA BE ANGRY WITH HIS POSITION STRIPPED?
SERIZAWA WAS THE ONE WHO PROPOSED IT
EH...
SERIZAWA'S UNREASONABLE, BUT HE HAS HIS CUTE POINTS, TOO
HE MUST HAVE REFLECTED UPON HIS ACTIONS LAST NIGHT
PROBABLY ALSO FELT APOLOGETIC TOWARDS YOU.
ABOUT LAST NIGHT...

IT'S EMBARRASSING, SO I'M TRYING NOT TO RECALL WHAT HAPPENED...
HAHAHA, THEN LET'S DROP THE SUBJECT.
HIJIKATA-KUN, ARE YOU FROM AN ARISTOCRATIC FAMILY?
...NO, I'M A COMMONER
YOU DON'T LOOK IT
...THEN YOU MUST BE A WEALTHY FARMER, RIGHT?

YOU HAVE CALLUSES, BUT THEY'RE SWORD CALLUSES NOT CALLUSES FROM DOING FARMWORK.
YOU SEEM MORE LIKE YOU'RE FROM A MERCHANT FAMILY, RATHER THAN A FARMER FAMILY
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN IN THE SUN MUCH AND YOU'RE QUITE [illegible]-MANNERED
MY FAMILY ALSO RAN A BUSINESS AND I WAS MADE TO HELP OUT. SO THAT MIGHT BE WHY
A RUSHNESS?
WE MADE A TYPE OF MEDICINE CALLED 'ISHIDA POWDERED MEDICINE' ....
AND OFTEN PEDDLED IT AROUND THE TAMA AREA NEAR OUR HOME.
HEH, WHAT'S THAT MEDICINE GOOD FOR?
BRUISES, SPRAINS, FRACTURES AND THE LIKE.
IT'S DRUNK AS HOT SAKE.

GLOOM
.....
AHH, MY APOLOGIES.
HAHAHA, WELL...
THEN YOU SHOULD DRINK IT YOURSELF. YOU'D GET BACK ON YOUR FEET IN NO TIME.
WHY ARE YOU IN THE ROUSH! GROUP, HIJIKATA-KUN?
.....
MANY PEOPLE JOIN FOR THE SUPPLY FEE THAT'S GIVEN OUT, BUT YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE ONE OF THEM.
NO, WELL...
DO YOU ASK EVERY-ONE THAT QUESTION, SASAKI-SAN?

YOU GROW ARROW BAMBOO IN THE GARDEN, TOSHI?
I...

GROWING ARROW BAMBOO IN THE GARDEN IS WHAT SAMURAI FAMILIES DO...
TOSHI DO YOU WANT TO BE A SAMURAI?
17 YEARS OLD
...DO YOU THINK IT'S IMPOSSIBLE, TAMEJIROU-NIISAN?
BEING A SAMURAI, YOU MEAN?
I DON'T THINK IT'S [illegible]SIBLE
I BELIEVE THAT THERE'LL ALWAYS BE A CHANCE SOMEWHERE IN SOME FORM
IF I COULD SEE I THINK I'D DO WHAT YOU DID TOSHI

A SWORD...
OH YEAH, I'LL GIVE YOU SOMETHING NICE.
WHOA, THAT'S DANGEROUS! DON'T UNSHEATHE IT!
CLANG
HMM, IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE IT'S RUSTED...
I SAID IT BEFORE, DIDN'T I? I'M LIKE YOU!
WHY WOULD YOU HAVE A SWORD...?
CLINK
IT COST QUITE A BIT, TOO.
IT'S UNSIGNED, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE A PRETTY GOOD ONE.

BE A SAMURAI IN MY STEAD, TOSHI.
HONE YOUR SWORD SKILLS, AND WAIT FOR A CHANCE.
I...

...I SEE.
I WANT TO BE A SAMURAI ...

IF YOU BLUSH LIKE THAT I'LL FEEL SHY, TOO
GUARD THE SHOGUN IN THE CAPITAL WELL... AND BECOMING A SAMURAI WON'T JUST BE A DRE

WITH THE AMERICAN AND ENGLISH LOT COMING, THE SHOGUNATE'S BECOMING MORE COMPLEX. THE HIRING OF PEOPLE PROBABLY WON'T REMAIN THE SAME.
IF YOU HAVE THE SKILLS YOU'LL PROBABLY BE APPOINTED
KIYOKAWA, WHO'S HEADING THE ROUSHI GROUP AND IS CENTRAL TO IT, IS ALSO A RONIN
SPEAKING OF KIYOKAWA... YAMAOKA-SAN,
IS HE ALL RIGHT?
BY "ALL RIGHT" YOU MEAN—?
I CAN'T GRASP WHAT HE'S THINKING
ADVOCATING REVERENCE FOR THE EMPEROR AND THE EXPULSION OF THE FOREIGNERS—
IS ALL WELL AND GOOD, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE KIYOKAWA'S MAKING LIGHT OF THE SHOGUNATE BY PLANNING TO IMPLEMENT IT

(TN: UDONO – UDONO KYUUICHI, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ROUSHI GROUP MANAGED THE ROUSHI IN PLACE OF MATSUHIRA CHIKARANOSUKE.)

I'M A RETAINER TOO, BUT I DON'T FEEL THAT WAY...
IN HINDSIGHT, WE KNOW THAT HE'S PLANNING TO MAKE USE OF THE SHOGUNATE FROM EVERY WORD HE SAYS.
I CAN SENSE THAT HE'S MAKING A FOOL OUT OF SHOGUNATE RETAINERS LIKE UDONO AND I
I LIKE KIYOKAWA-SAN, THOUGH.
AND ALSO YOU'RE AS SLIPPERY AS AN EEL. SO KIYOKAWA PROBABLY FINDS IT HARD TO DEAL WITH YOU, TOO.
THAT'S BECAUSE YAMAOKA-DONO IS AN OLD FRIEND OF KIYO-KAWA.
HE ASKED ME THE OTHER TIME IF I WAS PREPARED TO LAY DOWN MY LIFE FOR THE SAKE OF MYSELF, THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE
HE HAS GRAND IDEAS.

HUH...?
ARE YOU PREPARED TO LAY DOWN YOUR LIFE FOR THE SAKE OF YOURSELF, THE COUNTRY, AND THE PEOPLE?
LOOKS LIKE KIYO-KAWA-SAN HAS BEEN THINKING ABOUT IT DAY AND NIGHT AND PUTTING IT INTO ACTION.
HOW ABOUT YOU, HIJIKATA-SAN?
...I'M NOT EDUCATED SO I'VE NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT STUFF LIKE THAT BEFORE.
I DON'T THINK I'M IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO DISCUSS AFFAIRS OF THE STATE.
THE ONLY THING I CAN DO IS USE A SWORD.
I'LL JUST DO WHAT I CAN WITH MY SWORD.

WE'RE ALIKE
I SAID SOMETHING CLOSE TO WHAT YOU JUST SAID TO KIYO-KAWA-SAN AND HE GOT MAD AT ME.
HIJIKATA-SAAAAN
SOUJI.
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO COME.
ARE YOU FEELING BETTER NOW?
OH MY. YOU ARE.
I WAITED FOREVER AND YOU NEVER CAME. SO I WENT LOOKING FOR YOU.
I'M KAMAOKA TETSU-TAROU. AND THIS IS SAGAKI TADAKI-BUROU-DONO
ARE YOU ANOTHER STUDENT LIKE HIJIKATA-SAN?
OH, YOU MUST BE THE KOUBUSHO SWORD INSTRUCTORS.

(TN: KOUBUSHO: A MILITARY ARTS SCHOOL SET UP BY THE SHOGUNATE.)

I HEARD THE RUMORS.
To be accurate, he's meditating for the instructor's...
SASAKI-SAN, WHO IS SAID TO BE JAPAN'S BEST WITH A KODACHI IN HIS HANDS...
(TN: KODACHI: A SHORT SWORD)
AND YAMAOKA-SAN WHO HAS EARNED THE NAME OF 'IRON DEMON' AFTER HE KNOCKED DOWN THE HAMEITA WALLS OF THE DOJO IN A RAGE USING A BAMBOO SWORD DURING PRACTICE.
(TN: HAMEITA: WOOD USED TO BUILD CEILINGS AND WALLS)
SIGH
BH? IS THAT SO?
YOU DIDN'T KNOW!?
WHAT WERE YOU DOING? JEEZ.
IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR ROLL CALL, SO WE HAVE TO MEET UP WITH EVERY-ONE ELSE NOW.
I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU MORE. HOW DISAP-POINTING
DIDN'T YOU TALK ABOUT SWORDPLAY ON THE WAY HERE!? WHAT A WASTE

WELL THEN, WE'LL TAKE OUR LEAVE.
AH. SEE YOU SOON.
JUST WHAT WERE YOU TALKING ABOUT WITH HIM?
ABOUT ME. AND ABOUT KIYO-KAWA.
KIYO-KAWA. AS IN THE LEADER OF THE ROUNIN?
IF I RE-MEMBER CORRECTLY, HE'S A MASTER OF THE HOKUSHIN ITTORYUU
...YOU MUST BE A SWORD MANIAC TO BE VIEWING PEOPLE ONLY IN TERMS OF THEIR SWORD TECHNIQUES...

(TN: HOKUSHIN ITTORYUU IS A SWORD STYLE OF THE BAKUMATSU ERA.)

CHUUKYOU AREA MIBU VILLAGE, SHINTOKU TEMPLE
A FEW DAYS LATER, KYOTO
OUR OBJECTIVE OF GOING TO THE CAPITAL IS NOT JUST TO PROTECT THE SHOGUN.
I JUST TOOK NOTE OF IT WHEN I GREETED HIM...
HE SEEMS TOO CAUGHT UP IN HIS OWN INTELLECT, SO I DIDN'T REALLY FIND HIM LIKEABLE

WE'RE NOT JUST A BUNCH OF ROUNIN, WE'RE CITIZENS OF THE EMPIRE WHO ASPIRE FOR REVERENCE FOR THE EMPEROR AND THE EXPULSION OF THE FOREIGNERS.
AS SUCH, I PLAN TO INFORM THE IMPERIAL PALACE THAT WE WILL BE GOING TO THE CAPITAL.
WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS?
PROBABLY TO INFORM THE EMPEROR THAT WE'LL BE GOING TO THE CAPITAL.
mutter
mutter
I PRESUME EVERYONE HAS NO OBJECTIONS.
MUTTER

SO THIS MEANS THAT WE'RE BY-PASSING THE SHOGUNATE CABINET?
ISN'T HAVING THE ROUNIN DIRECTLY UNDER THE EMPEROR STRANGE?
I KNEW I DIDN'T LIKE KIYOKAWA-SAN.
WHAT WILL YOU DO, HIJIKATA-SAN?